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## Review Article

### SHORT REVIEW ON PAIN (VEDANA) BY SUSHRUTA

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#### ABSTRACT

Pain is an unpleasing sensation and emotional experience that links to tissue damage. It allows the body to react and prevent further tissue damage. It is an unpleasant feeling which only the individual himself can experience because of that it cannot be objectively defined satisfactorily. However, International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) defines pain as, "An unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage. It is not just a physical sensation, it is influenced by attitudes, beliefs, personality and social factors, and can affect emotional and mental wellbeing" which somehow help to define pain. The present study reviewed all the literature related with pain in Ayurvedic literature as mentioned in *Sushruta Samhita*. The basic aim of this study was to explore briefly and review the concept of pain as per *Sushruta Samhita*. And for the same various books especially *Sushruta Samhita* and related supportive books and other web-based articles were reviewed for the better understanding of the concept. Only secondary data were used for writing this article.

**KEYWORDS:** *Sushruta*, Pain, *Vedana*.

#### INTRODUCTION

*Vedana* or pain everyone experiences it in their life at least once. People feel pain when a signal voyages through nerve fibers to the brain for its interpretation. The experience of pain is different for every person, and there are various ways to feel and describe pain. This variation can be, in some cases, make it challenging to define and treat pain. It can be short or long term and stay in one place or spread around the body. Sometimes it is very difficult to understand where exactly the pain is. *Kashyapa* considered in his *Vedanadhyaya* that the pathology of pain in small children is very difficult to understand as compare to young children. It is far difficult to examine a child clinically because of his fear and non-cooperation towards unknown physician for the reason that of the symptoms are not fully defined to diagnose the particular disease or pain<sup>[2]</sup>.

Pain occurs in many clinical situations, like the pain after a host of different surgical procedures, the pain of biliary or renal or intestinal colic, the pain from primary or metastatic malignant invasion of soft tissue or bone. Somatic pain usually well defined and is generally caused by inflammatory reaction in the tissues.

Pain is indispensable for survival. It serves a protective function by signaling the presence of

noxious, tissue damaging conditions from a medical and surgical standpoint, the subjective description and indication of the location of pain may help pinpoint the fundamental cause of disease.<sup>[3]</sup>

Pain acts as warning signal against disturbances either in the body or in the external environment of discrete and has a defensive function. Pain is a basic delinquent faced by the physician and surgeon as well since ancient times. Yet, analgesics are the drugs which relieve pain without causing loss of consciousness and temporarily abolish awareness of pain.

#### An Ayurvedic view on PAIN

In Ayurvedic texts, various terms such as, *Ruk*, *Ruja*, *Vedana* and *Shool* are commonly used for pain, however, '*Shool*' is more appropriate term amongst all, stating the definition of *Shool* as experience similar to driving a nail into the body of the person.

In Ayurveda, *Vedana* has enormous importance for determination of *Vyadhi* (disease). The various kind of meanings of *Vedana* explained by Ayurvedic texts such as knowledge, perception, feeling, sensation, pain, torment, agony and anguish<sup>[4]</sup>. According to Ayurvedic text Pain (*Vedana*,

*Ruja*) is produced only from *Vata Dosha*. *Vedana* felt by *Rashipurusha* such as joys and sorrows but *Vaidya* treats only the sorrows. Ayurveda explained that *Vedana* due to disturbances in *Dhee* (intelligence), *Dhriti* (patience) and *Smriti* (memory) in coordination of *Indriya* (senses).<sup>[5]</sup>

In *Charaka Samhita*, *Charaka* described that, *Vedana* (pain) created due to *Raja* (*Manasdosha*) and *Vayutatva*. When *Rajoguna* covered on *Satva* and *Tama*, then *Vedana* started. *Vayutatva* (*Avrittavata*) is also main explicit for *Vedana*. The skin is shelter for *Vayutatva*.<sup>5</sup> And to overcome *Vedana*, *Charaka* explained about some herbal analgesic drugs in his text such as *Shool Prashamana*, *Angamarda Prashamana*, *Vedana sthapana Mahakashaya Gana*.

Nevertheless, in *Ashtanga Sangraha*, *Vagbhata* given an account of various methods of pain management in *Vrana Pratishedha Adhyaya* such as *Pachana*, *Shodhana*, *Varti*, *Dhoopana*, *Panchakarma*, *Dhooma*, *Kawala* etc.

While, *Sushruta* explained importance of pain by disease definition such as, "man is the receptacle of any particular disease, and that which proves a source of torment or pain to him, is denominated as a disease."<sup>[6]</sup> *Sushruta* explained different kinds of pain in the context of types and stages of *Vrana*, *Vranashotha*, *Bhagna*, *Marmaghata*, *Pranashtashalya* and *Vatavyadhi* (neuromuscular and musculoskeletal diseases). He thought that there can be no pain without the intervention of the deranged *Vayu*.

### **Pain and its physiognomies with reference to Vrana by Sushruta**

Different kinds of pain which are experienced in the several types of *Vrana* (wound) like *Vataja vrana*, *Pittaja vrana*, *Kaphaja vrana*, *Raktaja vrana* and *Sannipataja vrana*.

In *Vataja vrana*- *Todana* (feeling of pain as though being pricked by needles), *Bhedana* (feeling of pain as though muscle is being torn apart), *Tadana* (feeling of pain as though being beaten by sticks etc), *Chhedana* (feeling of pain as though the surface is being cut by a sharp instruments), *Ayamana* (feeling of pain as though a constricted part of the body is forcefully being stretched), *Manthana* (feeling of pain as though being the part affected is being churned internally), *Vikshepana* (feeling of pain as though being thrown apart), *Cumcumayana* (feeling of pains though the surface is smeared with the paste of *Sarshapa* or *Rajika*), *Nirdahana* (feeling of pain as though the part affected is directly subjected to fire), *Avabhanjana* (feeling of pain as though part is crushed down in to powder), *Sphotana* (feeling of pain as though part is broken like a hard stone), *Vidarana* (feeling of pain as though the part is being torn out by nails etc), *Utpatana* (feeling of pain as

though the part is as being pulled upwards) *Compana* (feeling of pain as though being vibrated from inside) and kind of sensations like- *Vishleshana* (feeling of pain as though being hit by various weapons), *Vikirana* (feeling of pain in different parts of the body without any continuity as though pain is scattered), *Stambhana* (feeling stiffness in the affected part), *Purana* (feeling of fullness in the affected part), *Svapna* (feeling of numbness of the affected part), *Akunchana* (feeling of pain as though the affected part is being twisted) and *Ankushika* (feeling of pain as though being affected by a clinical condition "Khalli" that is, pain in the foot when trying to walk) in this kind of wound the onset an relief pain is not relatable to any apparent cause and the occurrence of pain is more frequent.

In *Pittaja Vrana Sushruta* describe the nature of pain as like, *Osha* (localized burning sensation), *Chosha* (feeling of as though the part affected is being sucked forcefully), *Paridaha* (burning sensation all over the body), *Dhumayana* (feeling as though fumes are coming out of the affected part), "*Gatram Angara Avakiranaiva Pachyate*", (feeling of burning as though burning coal is just spilled over the affected part), rise in the temperature in the affected part and "*Kshate Kshara Avashiktvavedana*", (feeling of pain as though alkali has been applied to an open wound).

In *Raktaja Vrana* the sensation experienced and characteristics of the pain as similar to that of *Pittaja Vrana*.

Whereas, in *Kaphaja Vrana* the pain clarified by *Sushruta* as *Kandu* (Itching), *Gurutvam* (feeling of heaviness in the affected part), *Suptatvam* (numbness, an inability to perceive in the sense of sting of nail of bee or flies etc), *Upadeha* (feeling as though the affected part is smeared by a paste). He also institutes that pain is not severe in, *Stambha* (feeling of stiffness) and *Shaityam* (feeling of coldness in the affected part).

In the category of *Sannipataja Vrana* the sensation experienced and characteristics of the pain is the combination of pain explained in *Vataja Vrana*, *Pittaja Vrana*, and *Kaphaja Vrana*.<sup>[7]</sup>

*Sadhya Vrana* occurs in *Pranavata* which causes very less pain. *Asadhya Vrana* occurs in *Vedanavanta* which causes acute pain.<sup>[8]</sup>

Swelling is marked by a sort of aching pain is due to deranged *Vata*. Swelling is marked by a burning; sucking pain is due to deranged *Pitta*. Swelling accompanied by pain and itching is deranged condition of the *Kapha*.<sup>[9]</sup> And the part of the body which is marked by pain and swelling, or which seems heavy and is repeatedly handles, or constantly presses with his own hand, or which exudes any sort of secretion, and is marked by a sort

of excruciating pain, or which he involuntarily withdraws from or constantly guards against (an imaginary painful contact) should be regarded as clearly indicative of the exact location of the embedded *Shalya*.<sup>[10]</sup>

Henceforward, *Sushruta* explained different types of pain in the context of *Shotha* (swelling), the suppurating stage gives rise to sensation of pricking pain in the affected locality. The swelling seems as if it is being pricked with needles or bitten or wandered over by a host of ants, or cut with a knife, or pierced with a spear, or thrashed with a club, or pressed with the hand, or scraped round with fingers, or burnt with a fire or an alkali. The patient complains of a sort of sucking, burning pain in the swelling of a fixed or shifting character. The patient, as if stung by a scorpion, does not find comfort in any place position. The hue of the local skin is changed, and the swelling goes on increasing like an inflated leather bag and fever, thirst, a burning sensation and aversion to food etc. which gradually supervene.<sup>[11]</sup>

#### Stages/ phases of *Vrana* according to pain<sup>[12]</sup>

- *Shuddha avastha* (stage of transition) has no pain or very less pain
- *Dushta avastha* (stage of extension or proper ulceration) has different types of pain according to *Dosha* and *Dushya*.
- *Ruhyamana avastha* (stage of repair) has less pain with itching sensation.
- *Rudha avastha* (healed ulcer) has no pain and swelling. It merges with skin.

#### Care Taking in Pain

In the context of care of wounded patients, the friends and relatives of a patient shall alleviate the pain of his ulcer with pleasant talks with the prospect of a speedy recovery. An ulcer patient should not sleep in the day time, as it tends to aggravate the pain, swelling and redness of ulcer.<sup>[13]</sup>

#### Management of Pain

In the context of pain management, *Sushruta* advised to sprinkle powder of *Yashtimadhu* with *Ghrta*, *Rakshoghna* *Dhoopana* and *Mantra*, *Agnikarma*, *Jalaukavacharana*, *Raktamokshana*, *Lepana*, *Shastrakarma*, *Vataghna Upakrama* etc. He also listed herbal analgesic drugs as *Nyagrodhadi varga* and *Pippalyadi varga*.

#### Clinched of the Review

According to modern medicine pain is a subjective one and is difficult to assess and quantify. Pain perception varies from person to person and from time to time. It can be physical or mental, localized or diffused, acute or chronic, intermittent or persistent, mild or severe. Causes of pain listed such as inflammatory due to any infection or infestations,

hypoxia due to poor blood supply, trauma, obstruction, colicky pain, compression over nerve root, advanced malignancies, ulcers, perforation, peritonitis, abscess formation etc.<sup>[1]</sup> So as in Ayurveda too which was quite similar to the concept of modern system.

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